PREFERRED NAMES FAQs

Sacramento State recognizes that many individuals use names other than their primary (or legal) names for a variety of personal, cultural, or other reasons. Accordingly, students, faculty, staff, and administrators may use a preferred name (or chosen name) for a variety of university-related purposes when an individual's primary name is not otherwise required. Please find below a list of frequently asked question and their corresponding answers. If individuals have additional questions related to the use of preferred names, please contact the Office of Inclusive Excellence at diversity@csus.edu.

What is a preferred name?

A preferred name is a name an individual chooses to use other than their primary name, which is often the name given at birth and appearing on an individual's birth certificate or naturalization certificate. There are many reasons someone may choose to use a name other than their primary name. International students, transgender students, students known by middle names or nicknames, and others may wish to use a preferred name. Preferred names may be used for either first, middle, or last names, provided that the preferred names are not used for the purpose(s) of fraud, misrepresentation, or to evade legal obligations.

What is a primary (or legal) name and when is it required?

A primary name is an individual's legal name, which is the name that appears on your birth certificate, naturalization certificate, passport, driver's license, or U.S. Social Security Card. Most Sacramento State systems use the term "primary name" to refer to an individual's legal name.

An individual's primary name is required to be used on diplomas, official and unofficial transcripts, official student records, financial aid and scholarship records, DMV related records, and employment and payroll related documentation, including paychecks, benefits enrollment, and medical records. Accordingly, on these types of documents students and employees should expect to continue to see their primary name.

How do I begin using a preferred name for university-related purposes?

Individuals may begin using a preferred name for university-related purposes by logging into My Sac State.

Students: Click on **Student Center** in the center of the page and, in the **Personal Information Section**, click on **Names**. Click the **Add Preferred Name** button. Enter the name you wish to show and then click the Save button.

Faculty, staff, and administrators: Click on **Employee Center** in the center of the page and then click on the **Personal Information Summary** link. Click on the **Change preferred name** button and then click on the **Edit Name** button. Enter your preferred name and click **OK**. Then, click the **Save** button to finalize your changes.

Please note that it may take up to 48 hours for changes to take effect in all systems.

How do I change my primary (or legal) name?

Students, faculty, staff and administrators who wish to change their primary (or legal) name must first legally change their name pursuant to state law.

The University Registrar can assist students with a legal name change. After a student has obtained a certified copy of the legal name change document (i.e., legal name change or marriage certificate), the student will need to complete this form and return it (and all other necessary documentation) to the Office of the University Registrar.

Human Resources can assist faculty, staff, and administrators with a legal name change. Once an employee has obtained the certified copy of the legal name change document (i.e., legal name change or marriage certificate) should be presented to Human Resources.

Do I have to use a preferred name?

No. Using a preferred name is entirely optional. If an individual does not enter a preferred name, the individual's primary name will continue to be used for all university-related purposes.

Are there any restrictions on how many times I may change my preferred name for university-related purposes?

An individual may only enter a preferred name for university-related purposes at any time in the Student Center or Employee Center by logging into My Sac State. (See instructions below.) Students and employees should be aware that changing their preferred name multiple times may lead to identification issues and increased errors in relevant systems, reports, files, and reporting.

Are there any restrictions on the use of a preferred name for university-related purposes?

A preferred name should be the name an individual uses in social interactions and the name you want others to use when referring to you. An individual may not use a preferred name for the purpose of fraud, misrepresentation, perpetration of another person's identity, or to evade legal obligations. Preferred names may not include profanity, vulgarity, discriminatory language, or sexually suggestive words. Sacramento State reserves the right to remove a preferred name if it contains inappropriate or offense language.

What happens if a student or employee enters an inappropriate or obscene name?

University officials will regularly review a list of preferred names entered by students and employees.

Students who enter names containing inappropriate or obscene language or for those used for the purpose of academic misconduct or fraud will have their names removed at the discretion of university officials and reverted to the primary name.

Employees who enter names containing inappropriate or obscene language or those used for the purpose of fraud or perpetrating another person's identity will be have their names removed at the discretion of university officials and reverted to the primary name.

How can I minimize identification issues?

Individuals who use a preferred name for university-related purposes are encouraged to update their OneCard (or Sac State ID) and to memorize their student or employee identification number to avoid identification problems.

If you use a preferred name, it may be necessary to clarify that your preferred name is different than your primary name. Although Sacramento State is committed to using an individual's preferred name, there are times where a primary name or state issued identification must be used. In those instances, individuals may be required to provide their student or employee identification number to assist in verifying their identification as a student or employee or otherwise assist in clarifying an individual's identity. Examples of this include, but are not limited to, official interactions with police, security, and/or law enforcement, and verification of medical records.

When should I enter a preferred name?

Individuals are encouraged to enter a preferred name as soon as possible, even at the time of application for admission or hiring.

Students are strongly encouraged to begin using a preferred name prior to the beginning of the semester in which the student wants the name change to take effect class schedule and class roster may not get updated during the semester. If a student enters a preferred name after classes have begun, students are encouraged to speak directly with their instructors to ensure these individuals are aware that the student now uses a preferred name and to minimize errors related to attendance, grading, etc. as the semester progresses.

May I use a preferred name on my OneCard (or Sac State ID)?

Yes. After an individual has entered a preferred name for university-related purposes, the individual may request to issue or reissue their OneCard with their preferred name. For more information about OneCard, please click here.

May I use my preferred name at graduation?

Graduates' names will be pulled from their Student Center (including preferred name, primary name, and diploma name). During commencement registration, students will have the option of selecting which name they prefer to be read aloud, and which name they would like displayed on the screen during the ceremony.

Students can update their preferred name in their student center. Once you have completed the process of changing your preferred name, you must log back into the commencement ticketing/RSVP system to assure the name change has been captured.

Students with additional questions related to the names used during graduation events should consult the commencement website.

May I use my preferred name at Student Health & Counseling Services?

Yes, students may use a preferred *first* name at Student Health & Counseling Services (SHCS) by entering a preferred name either in the Student Center or the patient portal. In addition, SHSC's

patient portal also permits students to enter their gender identity and preferred pronouns. However, SHCS does not use preferred middle or last names.

There are some instances where the health center may require a student to show a government issued identification with the student's legal name, including when obtaining certain prescriptions, medical records, and some medical consents.

How does a change to my primary (or legal) name affect my preferred name?

An individual who legally changes their name, must submit necessary paperwork to either the Office of the University Registrar or Human Resources (Employee Action Request) to update their legal name in university systems. Changes to an individual's legal name do not result in a change in the individual's preferred name, unless a specific request is made at the time the legal name change paperwork is submitted to university officials.

In which Sacramento State systems may I use a preferred name?

An individual's preferred name will be used in the following university systems:

System that display preferred names only:

E-mail Display Name
Student Center
Employee Center
Campus Directory
Library System
Schedule of Classes
Class Rosters
Campus Bookstore System
My Sac State
OneCard (or Sac State ID)
Canvas
SacCT/SacLink account settings
Marching Order (graduation)
CSU Learn
Smart Planner
EAB (Student Success Management System used by all Sacrament State advisors)
Office 365
Simplicity-CSM (Career Center, Student Clubs and Organizations)
OrgSync (system used by Career Center and Student Clubs and Organizations)
CBOARD (Meal plans and Meal cards)
Learner Web
Blue Rec (system used by ASI)
Astra (Event and Class room scheduling system)
CSI SpectrumNG (Student Well membership)

Systems that will display both primary (legal) and preferred names:
PeopleSoft – CS (Student Database)
StarRez (Housing data base)
Simplicity Advocate (version used by Student Conduct)

Hobsons (Communication system used by the Office of Admissions and Outreach)
Point and Click (System used by the Health and Counselling Services)
T-2 (Parking database)
OnBase (the main document repository at Sacramento State)
All New Student Orientation reports

If I enter or change my preferred name on the Student or Employee center, will my Sacramento State's user ID/email automatically get updated to reflect my new preferred name?

No. In order to change your Sacramento State email (user ID) please submit an Account Rename request here.

If I am a Sacramento State employee and I entered/changed my preferred name on my Employee Center, will my name automatically update on the Sacramento State's phone directory?

No. If order for the Sacramento State's phone to display your preferred name, please submit Display Name Change Request here.

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